



Meeting Highlights

May 21, 2024

The mandate of the CASS First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Action Committee is to collaboratively identify effective education practices for school authorities through engaging with representatives of First Nations, Métis, Public, Separate, Francophone, Charter, Independent authorities, and associations.

Committee Membership for 2023-2024

CASS Representatives:

David Keohane – CASS CEO

Dr. Daphne Mai'Stoina – Board Representative

Dianne Roulson - CASS Leadership Consultant (related to the annual Indigenous Education Gathering)

Zone Representatives:

Betty Turpin – Superintendent, Holy Family Catholic Regional Division (Zone 1)

Peter Barron – Superintendent, St. Paul Education Regional Division, (Zone 2/3)

Tim De Ruyck (Committee Chair) – Superintendent, Wolf Creek Public Schools (Zone 4)

Cindy Stefanato – Director of Indigenous Learning, Rocky View Schools (Zone 5)

Robbie Charlebois – Associate Superintendent of Human Services, Lethbridge School Division (Zone 6)

Treaty Representatives:

Tracy Swampy-Sylvester – Superintendent, Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (Treaty 6)

Staahsistayaaki - Genevieve Fox – Director of Education, Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council (Treaty 7)

Chester Auger – Director of Education, Bigstone Cree Nation Education (Treaty 8)

Métis Representatives:

Dianne Desjarlais – Director, Alberta Métis Settlements General Council

Lisa Cruickshank – Director, Métis Education and Lifelong Learning, Rupertsland Institute

Charter:

Mavis Averill – Superintendent, Boyle Street Education Centre

Francophone:

Dolorèse Nolette – Directrice Générale/Superintendent of Schools, Conseil scolaire Centre-Est

AISCA:

Erin Murphy – Senior ECS Manager

Alberta Education:

Sarah Pearce – Director, Northern Region Rural, Urban, Métis and Inuit Education Branch

Ron Taylor – Director, Indigenous and North Services Branch

For more information, please contact:
Your representative and/or David Keohane
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Land Acknowledgement

Tim de Ruyck opened the meeting with the land acknowledgement.

Opening Prayer

A beautiful opening prayer was offered by Staahsistayaaki, Dr. Genevieve Fox.

Debrief on the Indigenous Education Gathering and Protocols and Expectations for Teaching Circles with Elders and Knowledge Keepers for Future Gatherings

Dr. Dianne Roulson and Jason Bigcharles shared positive feedback from the Gathering survey, highlighting the value people placed on their time with Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The event garnered a strong turnout and captivated attendees from the outset with a pipe ceremony and round dance, establishing a positive atmosphere. Another highlight was the increased presence of self-identified Elders and Knowledge Keepers this year, 46 compared to 27 last year. There were ideas for future gatherings, which includes:

- additional land-based learning opportunities and incorporating them into the schedule.
- ceremonies from different Nations in future Gatherings to ensure balance.
- more representation from Métis and Inuit in the program and opening ceremonies.
- need for better identification and highlighting of Elders through name tags or some other form.
- shift from calling sessions "Elder circles" to "Elder teachings" to focus on Elders providing teachings rather than a traditional circle format where everyone speaks.
- importance of pre-gathering meetings with Elders to clarify roles and expectations.
- monetary honoraria for Elders, to honour their time and knowledge.

This portion of the meeting concluded with expressions of gratitude for the hard work and guidance provided by all involved, aiming to use the feedback to improve future gatherings.

Update on CASS Conditional Grant: Deliverable 3

CASS Leadership Consultant Dr. Dianne Roulson shared updates about steps she has taken regarding the projects assigned to her through the CASS Conditional Grant.

Webinar Series - Stories of Practice re: Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships

Dianne focused her presentation on promoting the ongoing webinar series centered on fostering respectful relationships between school authorities and local Indigenous communities. The webinars are inclusive, recorded for accessibility, and involve significant participation

from Elders and Knowledge Keepers, with appropriate honoraria provided. The symbolic use of a beaded birch leaf as a gift was also discussed. Feedback on the webinars has been positive, emphasizing the importance of relationship-building for successful outcomes. Dianne also highlighted Crystal Clark's leadership role as they co-host the webinar series.

Mentorship - CASS Mentorship for Indigenous Leaders

The discussion centered around establishing a mentorship program for Indigenous leaders in Alberta, building on the recommendations from the [2020 ATA/CASS report](#). Collaborative efforts with Indigenous senior leaders and Elders are ongoing, with the goal of implementing the mentorship program next year.

Cultural Protocol Research and Survey

This initiative seeks to learn how school authorities are understanding, honouring, and learning about protocol within local Indigenous communities to support success for Indigenous students. The gathered information will be compiled into a resource document to guide future efforts.

CEP Course Design re: Indigenous Student Success and Grant Accountabilities

This course is being developed by a diverse team, guided by Jo Chrona's book, [Wayi Wah!](#), and aims to be widely accessible and applicable to various educational contexts. The project is progressing with an expected completion by the end of June.

CEP Course: Sharing Stonekeeper's Wisdom at the CASS/ASBOA Summer Conference

This course is designed to be held in-person with land teachings and is built around eliminating systemic racism and learning through land. It will be piloted at the summer conference, which will involve a local Elder and is co-facilitated by an Indigenous and a non-Indigenous leader with senior leadership experience.

Updates from Committee Members

Members shared updates on various educational initiatives, including resource development, and community engagement. Lisa Cruickshank provided a detailed update of Rupertsland's new resources for National Indigenous Peoples month, virtual field trips, artwork, and a program for Indigenous students.

Confirmation of Committee Participation for 2024-2025

Members will receive an email to confirm participation for next year. A call for participation will be shared if needed.